

Call for written evidence

Civil Society Shadow Report of England and Wales for the 2023 Pre-Sessional Working Group Report to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Background

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ([ICESCR](#)) protects rights such as housing, health, and education. It protects those essential conditions needed to live a life of dignity and freedom. About every 5 years the United Nations (UN) Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ([CESCR](#)) reviews the UK to see how well people in the UK are able to enjoy these rights and where the UK Government needs to improve its work to realise the rights.

One of these reviews is currently under way. In spring 2023 the UN CESCR will meet in Geneva to examine a report the UK Government submitted and ask them a series of questions about areas where they would like clarification or further information (see step 3 in the timetable below). This session is called the 'pre-sessional working group' (PSWG).

Civil society organisations are also invited to submit reports to the CESCR at this stage. Just Fair is co-ordinating a Civil Society Shadow Report for England and Wales to send to this committee. We are asking groups to submit evidence to us to include in this report.

What to send

Our final report will be very short – only 15 pages long. This means that we are asking groups to try to be **as brief and to the point as possible** in their responses. We do recognise though that some issues are nuanced and require detail, so we have decided not to impose a word limit. We just ask groups to bear in mind the length of the final report and the number of important issues that we will be looking to include.

Please send us written evidence **in either English or Welsh** on how well the rights within [the Covenant](#) are being realised in England and Wales (a '[plain English](#)' version of the Covenant can be found here). Some things to think about:

- **Please make sure any evidence you provide is properly referenced.** This may include telling us the title, author, and date if it is a publication, or it may mean telling us when, where, and by whom a quotation was gathered if it is a direct statement or evidence from a person with lived experience of rights violations (please don't include any personal details about a person providing testimony).
- We really welcome evidence **from people with direct experience** of violations of the rights in the Covenant, as we believe this to be hugely important ([read more about our commitment to breaking down barriers to participation here](#)).
- **Please read the [Concluding Observations](#) from the last time the UK was reviewed in 2016.** These are the recommendations the UN CESCR made. Let us know if there has been any progress, or if things have got worse.
- Please let us know if there are **any inaccuracies, or important areas that the UK Government has not covered** in the [report it sent](#) to UN CESCR in May (called the 'State Party Report').
- **We will publish all the evidence we receive on our website.** Please let us know if you would like your evidence to be published under the name of your organisation or whether you would like it to be published anonymously.
- When thinking about how a certain right is being realised in the UK, you might find the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC's) [Human Rights Tracker](#) tool useful as reference.
- Please send all written evidence to ICESCR@justfair.org.uk **by 5pm on Monday 26 September 2022**. You can also contact this email address if you have any questions about this work.

Online support sessions

We will be hosting an online session on [Tuesday 13 September at 10am](#) for groups in England and on [Thursday 15 September at 2pm](#) for groups in Wales for more information about this call for evidence. These sessions will be an opportunity for groups to ask questions, seek clarity and get support before submitting written evidence. For more information and to book your place at one of these sessions, click [here](#) (England) and [here](#) (Wales).

What we will do with the information you send us

When sending us information please remember that final report can only be 15 pages in total. This means **we will not be able to include everything we are sent** – but we will read and consider everything you send us.

We will send the final report to the UN CESCR on or before the deadline for submissions which is **9 January 2023**.

In **February 2023 we will launch** the report in England and Wales, versions of the report will be available in both English and Welsh. Everyone who submits evidence will be invited to the launch events.

Timeline of the process

The Pre-sessional Working Group, which we are preparing this report for, is one step in the whole review process. Check out our table below for more information, dates, and predicted dates, for the rest of the review process.

Step 1: May 2022

State Party Report: the UK Government sends in its ‘State Party Report’ – explaining to the Committee how it is achieving rights in the Covenant.

Step 2: Summer 2022 – 9 January 2023

Parallel Report to Pre-Sessional Working Group (PSWG): civil society groups can send in a report to the Committee on how they believe the UK Government is achieving rights in ICESCR.

Step 3: 6-10 March 2023

Pre-Sessional Working Group: a number of members of the Committee meet in Geneva to develop a ‘List of Issues’ that they want more information on from the UK Government. Civil society can give oral evidence.

Step 4: at least 3 months before the review

Response to List of Issues: UK Government sends a written report on the issues the Committee members asked about.

Step 5: at least 6 weeks before the review

Parallel/Shadow Reports: civil society groups submit updated reports to the Committee on the UK Government.

Step 6: Spring/Summer 2024 (approximately)

‘The Review’: over a couple of days in Geneva the Committee examines all the evidence from the UK Government, civil society, and others. It questions the Government, and civil society can give oral evidence.

Step 7: about a month after the Review

Concluding Observations/Recommendations: The Committee produces a report with a series of recommendations for the UK on how it could better achieve the rights in the Covenant.

Resources

[Explainer: What are economic and social rights and how are these rights monitored in international law?](#)

[The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#)

[‘Plain English’ version of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#)

[UK State Party Report 2022](#)

[Overview of the UK State Party Report](#)

[2016 Concluding Observations from the UN CESCR to the UK](#)

[Webpage of the UN CESCR](#)

[Information from UN CESCR for NGOS](#)

[The Equality and Human Rights Commission’s Human Rights Tracker](#)